



## Marketing on behalf of the Poor: An Integrated Framework for Poverty Elimination

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### Abstract

This paper synthesises a transformative framework for poverty elimination, moving beyond traditional aid models to one centred on capacity enhancement, dignity, and market integration. Drawing from Inspiration Economy Labs' achievements, it argues that sustainable poverty elimination requires transforming the poor from passive recipients into active architects of their own prosperity.

The framework is operationalised through seven interdependent pillars: (1) local capacity building and value addition, (2) development of equitable distribution channels, (3) ethical storytelling and branding, (4) integration with tourism and hospitality sectors, (5) formal certification and quality standardization, (6) establishment of social-for-profit cooperatives, and (7) strategic deployment of digital and media platforms. Central to this approach is the role of strategic empathy as a foundational operational tool, ensuring interventions are culturally resonant, dignity-preserving, and economically sustainable.

Empirical evidence drawn from longitudinal field projects in Ghana (shea butter cooperatives), Mauritania (camel wool carpet manufacturing), India (bamboo village enterprises), and Morocco (eco-tourism initiatives) demonstrates significant improvements in income stability, profit retention, and community-level economic resilience. The framework shows that we need to equip communities with the structural resilience necessary to withstand economic shocks and inflationary pressures.

This paper argues that improving the profit margin of the poor constitutes the fundamental lever for sustainable poverty elimination, transforming economic vulnerability into entrepreneurial agency.

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### 1. Introduction

Global poverty persists as one of the most complex and entrenched challenges of the 21st century, defying decades of substantial international aid, microfinance interventions, and development programming. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1—to end poverty in all its forms everywhere—highlights the ambition, yet traditional approaches have largely focused on poverty alleviation. This model, characterised by temporary income support, subsistence-focused aid, and basic needs provision, has proven inadequate in creating durable pathways out of economic vulnerability. Such approaches often inadvertently reinforce dependency, fail to address systemic market failures, and neglect the productive potential and agency of the poor themselves (Karnani, 2017; Buheji, 2019)<sup>[14, 2]</sup>.

This paper contends that a fundamental paradigm shift is required: from poverty alleviation to poverty elimination. Elimination implies not merely managing the symptoms of poverty but eradicating its structural causes by transforming the economic positioning of the poor within the global marketplace, Buheji (2020) <sup>[3]</sup>. The core thesis is that sustainable exit from poverty is not achieved through consumption support alone but through systematic improvement of the profit margin on goods and services produced by the poor. This margin-centric focus redefines the poor from being mere suppliers of low-value raw materials and consumers of high-cost essentials into inspiring social entrepreneurs, value-added producers, and equitable participants in value chains. Buheji (2025a) <sup>[10]</sup>

This transformative vision is operationalised through the synthesis of two powerful conceptual frameworks. The Inspiration Economy (Buheji, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup> provides the proactive methodology, positing that intangible assets—such as cultural heritage, communal resilience, inherited wisdom, and personal aspiration—represent a form of “inspiration currency” that can be leveraged to solve complex socio-economic problems. Complementing this, Santos and Lacznia (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> proposed an essential ethical foundation through what is called the asserting that market engagements with impoverished populations must be inherently just, fostering autonomous choice, fair exchange, transparency, and mutual long-term benefit. Buheji (2025b) <sup>[7]</sup>

The transformative tools of the Inspiration Economy create a robust model for market-based capacity enhancement. This paper delineates a concrete, seven-pillar operational framework derived from this synthesis, and illustrates its practical application and efficacy through detailed case evidence.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Realising the Role of Inspiration Economy Labs in Eliminating Poverty

As per the Inspiration Economy approach, the core philosophy of poverty elimination labs is to move beyond charity and temporary support, focusing instead on creating sustainable, market-driven solutions that enhance the profit margin through enhancing productivity, profitability, and dignity of poor and marginalised communities, Buheji (2025a) <sup>[10]</sup>. Marketing is not just about selling a product; it's about integrating the poor into the value chain, building brands, and creating market demand for their unique needs, products and skills. Buheji (2025b) <sup>[7]</sup>

### 2.2. Realising the Main Causes of Poverty

Poverty is not merely a lack of income but a deficit in economic agency and the ability to capture value. The poor are often integrated into markets at the most disadvantageous points—as producers of low-value raw materials and consumers of high-cost essentials (Alwitt, 1995) <sup>[1]</sup>. This creates a cycle where low profit margins perpetuate vulnerability. As Buheji (2019) <sup>[2]</sup> notes, shifting from poverty “alleviation” to “elimination” requires re-designing the economic discovery of wealth. The critical path to this is systematically improving the profit margin of the poor on the goods and services they produce. Buheji (2020) <sup>[3]</sup>

Two key frameworks inform this approach. Santos and Lacznia's (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> proposed an ethical foundation, positing that marketing to the poor must be based on creating

autonomous choice, fairness, and mutual value. This counters exploitative practices and insists that exchanges must be inherently just and dignity-affirming.

Second, the Inspiration Economy (Buheji, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup> moves beyond ethics to a proactive methodology. It advocates using the “currency of inspiration”—leveraging stories, resilience, and cultural heritage—to raise the capacity of any entity to solve problems. In this context, it means viewing the challenges of the poor not as constraints but as sources of unique value that can be marketed, while the Inspiration Economy provides the tools for transformative value creation.

### 2.3. Enhancing Product Value and Market Differentiation

Enhancing the product value and market differentiation for goods produced by the poor is the cornerstone of moving from subsistence to sustainable income. It involves a fundamental shift from selling raw, undifferentiated commodities to marketing unique, valued products.

Based on the principles of the Inspiration Economy and ethical marketing models, product value can be enhanced through implementing simple quality control standards that can start with training on consistent sizing for handicrafts, hygiene standards for food products, or durability for tools. A reliable product builds trust and justifies a higher price.

We need to understand how to identify and amplify the Unique Selling Proposition (USP). What makes the poor people's products special is their raw material, i.e. organic shea nuts from Ghana, specific camel wool from Mauritania, handmade bamboo products from Assam-India, etc. These require the design and the build-up of traditional techniques, besides the artisan's story. i.e. Made by women's cooperatives, preserving a cultural heritage and supporting an extended family in a village in Mauritania. Buheji (2024b) <sup>[8]</sup>, Buheji (2022b) <sup>[6]</sup>, Buheji and Kakoty (2022) <sup>[12]</sup>, Buheji and Korze (2020) <sup>[13]</sup>.

Even the social impact needs to be explicitly stated, i.e. for example, by mentioning how every purchase funds a child's education in the village or illustrating how the narrative of the inspiration economy currency works here to add to the context emotional value.

Thus, a carpet produced by a poor village isn't just marketed as a carpet, but it's a “Handmade Camel Wool Carpet from the artisans of Nouakchott, preserving a 1000-year-old Mauritanian tradition and supporting a women-led cooperative.” Buheji (2025b) <sup>[7]</sup>

### 2.4. Strategies for Enhancing Profit Margins through Branding

Improving profit margins requires a deliberate strategy to increase revenue while strategically managing costs. The transition from selling commodities to marketing branded products is fundamental. This involves implementing simple quality control measures to ensure consistency, which builds trust and allows for premium pricing.

Instead of selling raw agricultural produce (e.g., shea nuts), communities can be supported to produce finished goods (e.g., refined shea butter, soap), capturing more stages of the value chain (Buheji, 2024a) <sup>[8]</sup>. As demonstrated in projects like the Camel Wool Carpet Factory in Mauritania, embedding the product with a narrative of cultural heritage, artisan skill, and social impact creates immense intangible value (Buheji, 2022) <sup>[6]</sup>. The product becomes a symbol of

resilience and craftsmanship, not just a functional item. Profit margins are dictated by the market channel. The margins can be raised by storytelling and branding. Thus, breaking reliance on intermediary-dominated local markets is crucial. Utilising e-commerce platforms and social media allows producers to reach global conscious consumers directly, eliminating middlemen and increasing the share of the final sale price. By linking with tourism and hospitality, we can integrate products into eco-tourism and hotel supply chains, as seen in projects in Morocco and India, which provide a stable, high-value market that appreciates authenticity (Buheji, 2022a) <sup>[9]</sup>.

Through using cooperatives, as explored by Buheji and Bebana (2022) <sup>[11]</sup>, we amplify the bargaining power of the poor, allowing for bulk purchasing of inputs, shared costs for marketing, and collective negotiation for better prices.

### 2.5. Mastering the Augmented Product: Packaging and Branding

The poor would never have the chance to signal value to the customer before they even use the product. Therefore, introducing professionalised packaging, by moving from generic plastic bags to branded, attractive packaging and using materials that reflect the product's values, i.e. recycled paper for an eco-friendly product, or rustic cloth for a handicraft, etc., can change the game. Kotler *et al.* (2006) <sup>[16]</sup>. To include the story on the packaging, tags that name the artisan or community need to be used. This should be followed by a strong brand identity that develops a memorable brand name, logo, and colour scheme. The brand should embody the product's story and values. For example, the "Shea Butter from Ghana" can become "Inspiring Legacy Shea Butter" with a logo that incorporates a shea nut tree. This should be supported by a certification and authentication through a third-party validation, Buheji (2024b) <sup>[8]</sup>. This would build immense credibility. Even the type of certification would make a difference in raising the profit of the poor. For example, organic certification for food and cosmetic products would make a great difference. Besides, Fair Trade certification can signal ethical production and fair wages for the poor. It is very important to add the geographical indication to legally protect the product's name based on its geographic origin (i.e. Assam Silk, Perfume and Bamboo). This is a powerful long-term goal. Buheji and Kakoty (2022) <sup>[12]</sup>, Buheji and Korze (2020) <sup>[13]</sup>.

### 2.6. Optimise the Market and Distribution Mix

Kotler and Lee (2009) <sup>[15]</sup> shown how these marketing techniques can help promote health, education, community building, environmental protection, and family planning, besides addressing other social challenges that lead to the personal motivation of the poor. Kotler and Lee saw that marketing-informed methodology can help address specific poverty-related problems, and assess the results, where anti-poverty programs can be effectively linked to government, NGOs, and the private sectors.

Value is also determined by where and how the product is sold. Therefore, the shift in sales channels would help to move from selling in low-price local markets to higher-value channels. This can happen more than ever today through E-commerce, which creates a website for sale on different platforms that value handmade and ethical goods. Buheji (2025b) <sup>[7]</sup>

Part of the inspiration economy labs is to support the poor to reach the speciality and boutique stores that align with the product's story (e.g., eco-stores, fair-trade shops, museum gift shops). The labs even try to integrate the products of the poor with local tourism, especially those that represent the eco-tourism village models. This provides direct access to customers willing to pay for authenticity.

### 2.7. Develop "Social-for-Profit" (SoF) Models

We need to structure the business of social-for-profit to highlight its social mission. For example, once we create cooperatives so the poor are owners, not just labourers. Hence, we need to be transparent about how profits are reinvested into the community. This can become a key differentiator.

To highlight its unique value, every product should be represented by its price for value, not cost. Do not just calculate "cost + small margin", but focus on price based on the perceived value to the target customer. A tourist buying a story-rich handicraft as a souvenir will pay more than a local buying a utilitarian item.

Using authentic marketing materials through high-quality photos and videos of the artisans at work, in the community, and in the natural environment provides proof and builds an emotional connection. This could help to leverage on digital storytelling, where the use of social media can lead to further building on the ongoing story of the cooperative by showcasing new products, introducing artisans, and sharing the impact of sales. This builds a loyal following.

## 3. The Seven-Pillar Framework for Market Capacity Enhancement for the Poor

Drawing from the theoretical synthesis above, this paper proposes an integrated, seven-pillar operational framework. These pillars are interdependent and collectively designed to transform the market positioning of impoverished producers.

### 3.1. Pillar 1: Value Addition and Local Capacity Building

The initial and most critical step is to break the cycle of selling undifferentiated, low-margin commodities. This involves systematic investment in local capacity to transform raw materials into finished, branded products that command higher prices. Capacity building is multifaceted, encompassing technical skills training (e.g., quality control, food safety, craft finishing), basic business management, and product development. For instance, in the shea butter communities of Northern Ghana, the intervention moved beyond nut collection to training women in consistent cold-pressing, filtering, and soap-making techniques (Buheji, 2024b) <sup>[8]</sup>. This process enables communities to "move up the value chain," capturing the value-added at stages traditionally controlled by distant processors and brands. The goal is to transition from being price-takers in a commodity market to becoming quality-conscious producers in a branded goods market.

### 3.2. Pillar 2: Building Equitable Distribution and Sales Channels for the Poor

Even a high-value product fails to enhance the capacity if it must flow through exploitative, intermediary-heavy supply chains that extract most of the profit. Therefore, developing or gaining control over distribution channels is paramount. The foundational mechanism for this is the formation of

producer cooperatives. Cooperatives aggregate the output of many individuals, creating economies of scale in input purchasing, processing, and logistics. Critically, they confer collective bargaining power, enabling negotiations for better prices and terms, and allowing communities to bypass local middlemen who traditionally capture disproportionate margins (Buheji and Bebana, 2022) <sup>[11]</sup>.

This pillar also needs a resilient strategy that employs a multi-pronged channel approach to mitigate risk and maximise reach. This can be built on the following marketing and sales channels:

**Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) Digital Channels:** Leveraging e-commerce platforms (dedicated websites, Shopify, Etsy) and social commerce (Instagram, Facebook) allows producers to reach ethically-minded global consumers directly. This channel maximises profit retention and enables control over brand narrative.

**Tourism and Hospitality Linkages:** Integrating products into the tourism value chain provides access to a premium, experience-seeking market. This includes supplying boutique hotels with artisan amenities, selling through curated airport and museum gift shops, and developing “artisan village tour” experiences where tourists witness production and purchase directly.

**Institutional Business-to-Business (B2B) Channels:** Establishing supply agreements with ethical retailers, fair-trade organisations, and corporate gifting programs provides stable, volume-based demand. Advocacy for pro-poor public procurement policies can also open significant institutional markets.

**Innovative Last-Mile Solutions:** For reaching fragmented markets, innovative models like mobile sales vans, community kiosks, and agent-based networks using mobile phones can effectively connect products with both remote producers and low-income urban consumers.

### 3.3. Pillar 3: Leveraging Ethical Storytelling and Value-Added Packaging

In a crowded marketplace, functional quality alone is insufficient. Storytelling is the mechanism that imbues a product with intangible meaning, connecting it to consumer values and justifying a premium price. Ethical storytelling, however, must avoid “poverty porn” or exploitative narratives. It should be co-created with producers, based on consent, and built on principles of Authenticity, Dignity, and Impact. An effective narrative weaves together multiple layers: the Artisan’s Story (personal dreams and resilience); the Cultural Heritage Story (centuries-old techniques and symbolism); the Process Story (care, time, and skill invested); and the Impact Story (how purchase drives community development).

This narrative must be physically embodied in value-added packaging. Moving from generic plastic bags to professionally designed, branded packaging that uses appropriate materials (e.g., recycled paper, rustic cloth) fundamentally shifts consumer perception. Labels and tags become storytelling devices, featuring artisan names, cultural explanations, and QR codes linking to videos of the makers. The product thus becomes a tangible portal to a meaningful

human and cultural connection.

### 3.4. Pillar 4: Integrating with Tourism and Hospitality Markets

This pillar operationalises the channel strategy specifically for the high-potential tourism sector. It involves moving beyond selling souvenirs to offering authentic cultural experiences. Practical models include: the In-House Experience Model, where local products become part of the hotel’s identity (artisanal soaps in bathrooms, local textiles in decor, curated gift shops); the Immersive Tourism Model, where the production site becomes a destination (guided cooperative visits, live craft demonstrations at resorts); and the Culinary Integration Model, where local, community-sourced ingredients feature prominently in hotel restaurant menus. Successful integration requires adapting products for tourists (e.g., travel-sized, durable packaging), forging formal partnerships with hoteliers and tour operators, and training hospitality staff to knowledgeably convey the product’s story to guests.

### 3.5. Pillar 5: Branding, Certification, and Formal Market Access

To scale beyond niche markets, products must meet formal market standards. This involves developing a professional brand identity (name, logo, visual language) that consistently communicates quality and values. Strategic certifications are critical for building credibility and accessing broader channels. Organic, Fair Trade, and food safety certifications (e.g., FDA, EU standards) signal quality and ethical production to consumers and large retailers. Pursuing Geographical Indication (GI) status can legally protect a product’s name based on its origin (e.g., “Assam Bamboo”), creating long-term value and protecting against imitation. This process of formalisation legitimises community products in the eyes of mainstream distributors and export markets.

### 3.6. Pillar 6: Creating Social-for-Profit Cooperatives

The cooperative model is the keystone institutional structure that underpins sustainable capacity enhancement. A social-for-profit cooperative is a business entity that uses commercial principles to achieve social objectives. It legally embeds community ownership, democratic governance, and profit-sharing. This structure transforms isolated individuals into a collective entrepreneur with pooled resources, shared risk, and amplified voice. It is particularly effective for enhancing women development, as seen in numerous projects across Africa and Asia. The cooperative becomes the vehicle not only for production but also for channel development, marketing, and community reinvestment, ensuring economic gains are widely shared and anchored locally.

### 3.7. Pillar 7: Utilizing Digital and Media Platforms for Commerce and Mobilization

Digital technology is a force multiplier. Its role extends beyond e-commerce to broader community mobilisation and mindset change. Social media platforms are used for digital storytelling, building brand communities, and engaging directly with customers. Furthermore, traditional media like community radio and television can be harnessed in “Inspiration Economy” programs to shift public psychology—combating despair, fostering a culture of

entrepreneurship, raising collective aspirations, and coordinating action among youth, community leaders, and external partners. This pillar ensures that the framework leverages both the transactional and transformational potential of media.

#### 4. The Foundational Role of Strategic Empathy

Interwoven through all seven pillars is the indispensable element of strategic empathy. This is not passive sympathy but an active, disciplined practice of deeply understanding the world from the perspective of the poor—their aspirations, cultural contexts, daily challenges, and sources of pride. Strategic empathy is the critical differentiator between top-down, transactional projects and transformative, sustainable partnerships.

It functions in several key ways: First, it drives authentic co-creation, ensuring solutions are not imposed but developed collaboratively, leading to higher adoption and ownership. Second, it uncovers latent needs and assets, moving beyond superficial material lacks to identify deeper desires for dignity, respect, and legacy—which then inform product development and storytelling. Third, it builds essential trust, which is the social capital upon which cooperative models and new market relationships are built. Finally, in marketing, empathy reframes the value proposition from competing on “lowest cost” (a race to the bottom) to offering “greatest life value,” connecting the product to the customer’s own values and aspirations for a better world. Therefore, strategic empathy is the core operational competency that animates the ethical intent of the product from the poor and ensures the Inspiration Economy’s tools are applied with respect and efficacy.

#### 5. Discussion: Implications for Theory and Practice

This seven-pillar framework represents a significant contribution with implications for multiple disciplines.

##### 5.1. For Development Economics and Practice

The framework challenges the prevalent dichotomy between “development” and “business.” It presents a viable model for market-based development that is both scalable and sustainable, directly addressing Karnani’s (2017) <sup>[14]</sup> call to focus on productive capacity. By making profit margin improvement the central metric, it aligns incentives for long-term sustainability and shifts the accountability of development projects from donor reporting to market performance. It offers a concrete methodology for implementing the macro-micro synergy advocated by Kotler *et al.* (2006) <sup>[16]</sup>.

##### 5.2. For Marketing Theory and Ethics

This work proposes a restorative model of marketing. It directly responds to the ethical vacuum critiqued by Santos and Lacznia (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> and the systemic failures identified by Alwitt (1995) <sup>[1]</sup>. It demonstrates how marketing’s core competencies—in branding, channel management, and consumer insight—can be harnessed not for extraction, but for integration and justice. It expands the concept of “value” in marketing to explicitly include the restoration of dignity

and agency to producers, advocating for a triple bottom line (profit, people, planet) that is structurally embedded in the business model.

##### 5.3. For Social Entrepreneurship

The framework provides a structured “playbook” for social entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs seeking to build inclusive businesses. The seven pillars offer a diagnostic and design toolkit for transforming a raw community asset into a sustainable market venture. The emphasis on cooperatives and social-for-profit models provides clarity on governance structures that preserve mission integrity.

##### 5.4. Evidence of Efficacy and Replicability

The framework is not merely theoretical. Its pillars are derived from and validated by action research in the Poverty Elimination Lab’s projects. The success of Ghanaian shea butter cooperatives in accessing international cosmetics markets, the premium positioning of Mauritanian camel wool carpets in design galleries, the integration of Indian bamboo crafts with eco-tourism, and the development of cheese value chains in Sudan all serve as proof-of-concept. These cases demonstrate replicability across diverse cultural and sectoral contexts, provided the core principles of value addition, channel control, storytelling, and empathetic partnership are faithfully applied. These cases provide evidence not only of improved livelihoods but also of enhanced community resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of market fluctuations.

#### 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

##### 6.1. The Essential Focus on Profit Margin for the Poor

The enduring challenge of global poverty demands innovative, bold, and systemic solutions. This paper has argued that a sustainable path forward requires a fundamental re-conception: viewing poverty elimination as a process of market capacity enhancement rather than resource transfer. By focusing on the strategic enhancement of profit margins through the seven interrelated pillars of capacity building, channel ownership, ethical storytelling, tourism integration, formal certification, cooperative structures, and digital leverage—all animated by strategic empathy—we can transform the economic reality of impoverished communities. This approach moves beyond charity to foster justice and partnership; beyond supply chains to build shared value chains; and beyond vulnerability to cultivate resilience and self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, this margin-centric empowerment does not merely raise communities above the poverty line in stable times; it fundamentally repositions them to withstand economic shocks, inflation, and crises. The following analysis demonstrates how the seven-pillar framework inherently constructs economic resilience.

##### 6.2. The Role of Seven Pillars: Building Crisis and Inflation Resilience

Table (1) represents the proposed seven-pillar framework for marketing for the benefit of the poor and raising their capacity even during challenging times, i.e. such as inflation.

Table 1:

Pillar	How the Pillar Builds Resilience Against Crisis & Inflation?
1. Value Addition & Local Capacity	<i>Shifts from Commodities to Necessities/Luxuries:</i> A farmer selling raw tomatoes (commodity) suffers when food prices crash. A cooperative producing branded, bottled tomato sauce or sun-dried tomatoes captures more value, and its product is less price-volatile. Skills are an asset that inflation cannot erode.
2. Equitable Distribution Channels	<i>Reduces Dependence, Diversifies Risk:</i> Reliance on a single exploitative middleman is catastrophic if that channel collapses. A multi-channel approach (D2C e-commerce, B2B contracts, tourism) ensures if one market fails (e.g., tourism halts), others (e-commerce, local retail) can sustain. Cooperatives provide collective bargaining power to negotiate better terms even in tough times.
3. Ethical Storytelling & Branding	<i>Creates Price Inelasticity:</i> A generic good competes only on price, which is suicidal during inflation. A branded product with a powerful story (heritage, impact, artisan dignity) creates emotional value, making consumers willing to pay a premium that is resilient to cost pressures. The brand equity acts as an economic "moat."
4. Tourism & Hospitality Integration	<i>Links to Resilient/Recovery Sectors:</i> While tourism is cyclical, it often recovers quickly. Integration creates a stable, high-value outlet. More importantly, it builds a local "experience economy" that can attract domestic tourists during international crises, fostering internal market resilience.
5. Certification & Formalisation	<i>Unlocks Stable, Institutional Demand:</i> Organic, Fair-Trade, or GI certifications allow access to institutional buyers (hotels, retailers, government procurement) who sign long-term contracts. These contracts often have price adjustment clauses, providing a hedge against inflation and guaranteeing off-take during crises.
6. Social-for-Profit Cooperatives	<i>The Ultimate Resilience Structure:</i> Cooperatives pool resources to create community shock absorbers: a shared emergency fund, the ability to buy inputs in bulk at lower prices, and collective investment in processing equipment that reduces long-term costs. They transform individual vulnerability into collective strength.
7. Digital & Media Platforms	<i>Enables Agile Pivoting &amp; Direct Support:</i> Digital platforms allow producers to quickly communicate with customers about challenges, launch crisis-specific campaigns (e.g., "Support our artisans during lockdown"), and pivot sales strategies overnight. Mobile money integration ensures they receive payments directly and securely, even when markets are closed.

### 6.3. Applying the Framework During Crisis such as Hyperinflation

Traditional social safety nets aim to *catch* people falling below the poverty line during a crisis. Marketing on behalf of the poor aims to build a springboard that launches them away from it.

By using marketing not to *sell to* the poor, but to build market power *for* the poor, we equip them with

- **Higher Margin Cushions:** To absorb cost shocks.
- **Diversified Market Access:** To survive demand shocks.
- **Brand Equity & Skills:** Non-monetary assets that retain value.
- **Collective Agency:** Through cooperatives, to negotiate and adapt.

The goal shifts from managing poverty to engineering prosperity. In times of calm, this framework accelerates growth. In times of crisis, it is the very architecture of resilience, ensuring that hard-won gains are not wiped out but protected, allowing the poor to not just survive, but strategically navigate towards stability.

Pillars 1 and 3 can be used as a basis for strategic empathy that can help identify a core local need. If imported soap is unavailable, pivot the shea butter cooperative's production entirely to basic, affordable soap for the domestic market. The story becomes "Pure, Local Soap for Our Community's Health."

Local inputs can be used as per pillar 6, specifically when using cooperative collective power to barter with local farmers for essential oils or lye, bypassing the broken monetary economy. We also need to leverage on using direct channels as per the recommendation of pillars 2 and 7

through using mobile networks and social media to organise direct community sales or delivery. Accept payment in barter (food, services) or a stable alternative (e.g., mobile minutes).

To prepare for exporting, Fair Trade or organic certification, as per pillar 5, becomes more valuable than ever, guaranteeing hard currency earnings from ethical foreign buyers, which is a lifeline during inflation. Here, the cooperatives become a distribution network for essential goods for their members, using their credibility and structure to secure and share scarce resources.

### 6.4. Implication and Recommendations of this Study

The core implication of this study is improving profit margin as a key to sustainable poverty elimination. This market-based capacity enhancement builds systemic resilience against crises that shifts possible vulnerability to resilience. Therefore, the recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. **Longitudinal Impact Studies:** Rigorous, long-term studies are needed to quantify the socio-economic impacts (income, assets, education, health, gender equity) of this model compared to traditional aid.
2. **Policy Enabler Research:** Further research should investigate specific public policies (tax incentives, procurement rules, GI support) that can accelerate the scaling of such social-for-profit enterprises.
3. **Pedagogical Integration:** Business and marketing schools should integrate these principles into curricula to prepare a new generation of "restorative marketers."
4. **Toolkit Development:** Developing practical, open-source toolkits and metrics for implementing each pillar would lower barriers to adoption for NGOs and social entrepreneurs.

The goal is ambitious but necessary: to render poverty obsolete by enhancing the capacity of the poor to become the architects of their own prosperity. This framework offers a proven, ethical, and practical path toward that future.

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